

May 23, 2011

Dear Health Care Professionals,

As the weather warms, Kansans will spend time engaging in outdoor recreation at our numerous public lakes. Unfortunately fun in the sun can expose individuals to health threats that may be taken for granted.

Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) are prominent in Kansas waters, and under certain conditions harmful algal blooms will produce toxins that pose a health risk to people, with possible rapid symptom onset. During the months ahead we are asking for your help and heightened awareness.

Potential routes of exposure include ingestion, dermal contact or inhalation of airborne droplets containing toxins while swimming, boating and skiing. A large percentage of the public will report "allergic" type reactions after exposure, such as intestinal problems, respiratory problems, or skin irritations. If you have a patient presenting with these clinical symptoms, can confirm an exposure history to a body of water within a reasonable time period prior to symptoms, and have ruled out any other diagnoses, please consider this a suspect case and complete the "Algae Illness Reporting Form for Public and Medical Professionals" located at <http://www.kdheks.gov/algae-illness/index.htm> or call the Kansas Department of Health and Environment at 1-877-427-7317 to report any suspect case.

Exposure and Clinical Presentation

Route of Exposure	Symptoms/Signs
Ingestion	Malaise – Headache - Gastroenteritis - Hyper salivation Abdominal pain – Diarrhea - Vomiting Motor weakness - Respiratory and muscular paralysis Acute hepatitis - Kidney damage
Dermal	Rash – Hives - Skin blistering - Allergic reactions - Eye irritation
Inhalation	Upper respiratory irritation – Rhinitis - Possible allergic reaction

I appreciate your cooperation and assistance your input will allow us to help make the summer season fun and safe for all Kansans.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Moser, MD - Secretary
Kansas Department of Health & Environment